

Opening Statement
Senator Roberts
Ranking Member
Senate Rules & Administration Committee
S.375 - Mark-up

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for calling this mark-up. I support this legislation and hope we can report it out and bring it to the floor quickly.

This issue has been around for some time. We had a hearing on an identical bill in the last Congress.

According to the Federal Election Commission, the current system adds \$430,000 annually to the cost of processing these reports. Requiring electronic filing for Senate candidates will eliminate these costs, saving taxpayer money and improving efficiency.

Unlike some previous versions, the legislation before us will take the Secretary of the Senate out of the process and allow candidates for the Senate to file reports directly with the FEC, just as all other federal candidates do now.

Prior versions would have required the Secretary to develop a separate system to accept the filings electronically before transferring them to the FEC.

This legislation will require direct filing with the FEC and thereby save the money that would have otherwise gone to development of a redundant system. I think this is the better approach.

As I mentioned, we had a hearing on identical legislation in 2012. Prior to that, we had a hearing on a bill to require electronic filing in 2007. That bill was reported but never enacted due to a dispute over possible amendments.

While this legislation would fix an obvious problem, I suspect there are other problems in our current system Members might like to address.

We rarely have legislative vehicles to address these problems and I hope if other Members have ideas for other improvements, they will be given the opportunity to have them considered.

It would be a shame if five years from now we find ourselves still filing paper reports only because of unwillingness to even allow consideration of other common sense reforms.